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§ 20.510 How is the court involved in child placements?

The court retains custody of a child in placement and the care and supervision must be given to the appropriate social services agency. While the court can issue any court order consistent with tribal law, the courts do not have the authority to require expenditure of federal funds to pay for specifically prescribed or restrictive services or out-of-home placements of children. Case plans must be reviewed with the appropriate court at least every 6 months and a permanency hearing held within 12 months after a child enters foster care or residential care, or according to established tribal standards. These standards can be established in the tribal code and can be in accordance with available funding source requirements.

§ 20.511 Should permanency plans be developed?

Permanency planning must be developed for all child placements within 6 months after initial placement of the child. Every reasonable effort will be made to preserve the family and/or reunify the children with the family and relatives when developing permanency plans. However, the child's health and safety are the paramount concern.

§ 20.512 Can the Bureau/tribal contractors make Indian adoptive placements?

The Bureau is not an authorized adoption agency and staff must not arrange adoptive placements. However, long-term permanency planning can involve the Bureau social services workers cooperating with tribal courts to provide an adoption subsidy. Tribal contractors will provide adoption services as authorized by the tribal courts in accordance with tribal codes/law.

§ 20.513 Should Interstate Compacts be used for the placement of children?

Interstate compact agreements should be used when appropriate for foster care, adoption and guardianship to protect the best interests of the child and to assure the availability of the funding resources and services from the originating placement source.

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§ 20.514 What assistance can the courts request from social services on behalf of children?

The courts can request the following:

- (a) Investigations of law enforcement reports of child abuse and neglect;
- (b) Assessment of the need for out-of-home placement of the child; and
- (c) Provision of court-related services following adjudication, such as monitoring, foster care, or residential care, or pre/post placement services.

§ 20.515 What is required for case management?

Social services workers must document regular contact with children and families in accordance with specific program requirements. The social services agency is responsible for implementation of quality case management; this requires the supervisor's review of case plans every 90 days.

§ 20.516 How are child abuse, neglect or exploitation cases to be handled?

Reported child abuse, neglect or exploitation cases and the requirement for background clearances will be handled in accordance with the Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act of 1990, Public Law 101–630, 25 CFR part 63, federal and/or state laws where applicable, and tribal codes which protect Indian children and victims of domestic violence. This includes developing and maintaining Child Protection Teams in accordance to Public Law 101–630 and collection of child abuse, neglect and exploitation data according to Public Law 99–570. Those cases referred by the state will be handled according to the Indian Child Welfare Act, Public Law 95–608, and 25 CFR part 23.

Subpart F—Administrative Procedures

§ 20.600 Who can apply for financial assistance or social services?

- (a) You can apply for financial assistance or social services under this part if you:
 - (1) Believe that you are eligible to receive benefits; or
 - (2) Are applying on behalf of someone who you believe is eligible to receive benefits.

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(b) Under paragraph (a) of this section, any of the following may apply for benefits on behalf of another person: relatives, interested individuals, social services agencies, law enforcement agencies, courts, or other persons or agencies.

§ 20.601 How can applications be submitted?

You can apply for financial assistance or social services under this part by:

(a) Completing an application that you can get from your social services worker or tribe; or

(b) Through an interview with a social services worker who will complete an application for you based on the oral interview.

§ 20.602 How does the Bureau verify eligibility for social services?

(a) You, the applicant, are the primary source of information used to determine eligibility and need. If it is necessary to secure information such as medical records from other sources, you must authorize the release of information.

(b) You must immediately report to your social services worker any changes in circumstances that may affect your eligibility or the amount of financial assistance that you receive.

§ 20.603 How is an application approved or denied?

(a) Each application must be approved if the applicant meets the eligibility criteria in this part for the type of assistance requested and all recipients will be redetermined for eligibility every 6 months. Financial assistance will be made retroactive to the application date.

(b) An application must be denied if the applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria in §§ 20.300 through 20.516.

(c) The social services worker must approve or deny an application within 30 days of the application date. The local social services worker must issue written notice of the approval or denial of each application within 45 days of the application date.

(d) If for a good reason the social services worker cannot meet the dead-

line in paragraph (c) of this section, he or she must notify the applicant in writing of:

(1) The reasons why the decision cannot be made; and

(2) The deadline by which the social services worker will send the applicant a decision.

[65 FR 63159, Oct. 20, 2000; 65 FR 76563, Dec. 7, 2000]

§ 20.604 How is an applicant or recipient notified that benefits or services are denied or changed?

If the Bureau increases, decreases, suspends, or terminates financial assistance, the social services worker must mail or hand deliver to the applicant or recipient a written notice of the action. The notice must:

(a) State the action taken, the effective date, and the reason(s) for the decision;

(b) Inform the applicant or recipient of the right to request a hearing if dissatisfied with the decision;

(c) Advise the applicant or recipient of the right to be represented by an authorized representative at no expense to the Bureau;

(d) Include the address of the local Superintendent or his/her designated representative to whom the request for a hearing must be submitted;

(e) Advise the applicant or recipient that failure to request a hearing within 20 days of the date of the notice will cause the decision to become final and not subject to appeal under 25 CFR part 2; and

(f) Be delivered to the applicant 20 days in advance of the effective date of the action.

§ 20.605 What happens when an applicant or recipient appeals a decision under this subpart?

If you are an applicant or recipient and appeal a decision made under § 20.604, you can continue to receive your assistance while your appeal is pending. For this to happen, you must submit your appeal by the deadline in § 20.604(e).

§ 20.606 How is an incorrect payment adjusted or recovered?

(a) When an incorrect payment of financial assistance has been made to an